

# **Downtown Providence District Management Authority**

## **Public Hearing on proposed 2007 DPDMA budget**

**Thursday, May 18, 2006 8:30am**

**Director Granoff opened the public hearing at 8:40am. Directors present included Michael Corso, Robert Gagliardi, Evan Granoff, Richard Lappin, Christopher Placco, and Maria Ruggieri. Directors Tina Harlow, Joseph Paolino, Sr., and Stanley Weiss were absent. Ex-Officio members present included Joe DiBattista.**

**Others present included: Dan Baudouin, Executive Director of the Providence Foundation,; Joelle Crane, Program Manager of the Providence Foundation; Leslie Huikko, DID Office Manager; Frank LaTorre, DID Director of Public Space; Steve Gibson, President of Urban Place Consulting; and Frank Zammarelli, Block-By-Block Operations Manager.**

**Members of the Public in attendance: none**

**Steve Gibson of Urban Place Consulting noted that there were copies of the proposed budget available for those interested offered to entertain questions regarding the budget. There were none.**

**Joe DiBattista expressed his gratitude for the diligent work of the**

**staff and stated that he “is pleased to pay his assessment, as the results are immediately obvious.”**

**There being no members of the public present, Director Granoff adjourned the Public Hearing at 8:45am.**

**Downtown Providence District Management Authority  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Thursday, May 18, 2006 8:45am**

## **1. Roll Call**

**Director Granoff called the meeting to order at 8:50am. Directors present included Michael Corso, Robert Gagliardi, Evan Granoff, Richard Lappin, Christopher Placco, and Maria Ruggieri. Directors Tina Harlow, Joseph Paolino, Sr., and Stanley Weiss were absent. Ex-Officio members present included Joe DiBattista.**

**Others present included: David Alexis of the Black Repertory Theater; Dan Bauduoin, Executive Director of the Providence Foundation;; Joelle Crane, Program Manager of the Providence Foundation; Leslie Huikko, DID Office Manager; Frank LaTorre, DID Director of Public Space; Steve Gibson, President of Urban Place Consulting; and Frank Zammarelli, Block-By-Block Operations Manager.**

## **2. Approval of the minutes from April 20, 2006 meeting**

**Director Placco motioned to approve minutes from the April 20, 2006 Board Meeting. Director Lappin seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken as follows:**

**Director Corso   yes**

**Director Gagliardi           yes**

**Director Granoff   yes**

**Director Lappin   yes**

**Director Placco   yes**

**Director Ruggieri           yes**

**Therefore, the motion passed.**

## **3. Financial Report**

**Proposed 2007 DPDMA budget**

**Director Placco motioned to approve the proposed 2007 budget for the DPDMA with the same assessment rates as 2006. Director Gagliardi seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken as follows:**

**Director Corso   yes**

**Director Gagliardi           yes**

**Director Granoff   yes**

**Director Lappin   yes**

**Director Placco   yes**

**Director Ruggieri           yes**

**Therefore, the motion passed.**

## **Contract for auditing services**

**Seventeen requests for proposals to provide auditing services for the DPDMA for the financial periods ending June 30 or 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008 were issued. All CPA firms located within the district, including those on the minority-owned and women-owned business directory were solicited for proposals. Dan Baudouin presented a summary of the 2 responses to the RFP for accounting services. While both firms were highly qualified and experienced and both stated that the work can be completed in the timeframe requested, Lefkowitz, Garfinkel, Champi & DeRienzo, P.C.'s fees were significantly lower for the 4 periods identified in the RFP. In addition, staff from Lefkowitz, Garfinkel, Champi & DeRienzo, P.C met with the DID Office Manager to evaluate the DID financial operation in detail.**

**Director Gagliardi motioned to award the contract to Lefkowitz, Garfinkel, Champi & DeRienzo, P.C. under condition of compliance with the fee structure listed in the proposal and a not-to-exceed figure if a Single Audit is required by law. Director Lappin seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken as follows:**

**Director Corso yes**

**Director Gagliardi yes**

**Director Granoff yes**

**Director Lappin yes**

**Director Placco yes**

**Director Ruggieri yes**

**Therefore, the motion passed.**

## **Monthly financial report**

**Mr. Gibson of Urban Place Consulting presented the Statement of Financial Position and the Statement of Operations for the month of April. The DID continues to be under budget overall, due in large part to the frequent vacancies caused by turn-over in the Clean and Safety Team positions. As demonstrated by the Supplemental Collections Report, the assessments are consistently being paid, and DID staff anticipate a collection rate consistent with the 99% of the previous 5 quarters.**

**Director Gagliardi motioned to accept the financial reports as presented. Director Placco seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken as follows:**

**Director Corso yes**

**Director Gagliardi yes**

**Director Granoff yes**

**Director Lappin yes**

**Director Placco yes**

**Director Ruggieri yes**

**Therefore, the motion passed.**

## **4. Operations Committee Report**

**Director Gagliardi reported on the May 9 Operations Committee meeting. The State's sidewalk repair plan was discussed. A sidewalk walking inventory is scheduled for June 6 at 9am leaving from the DID**

office. This will set the priorities for the effort, which is scheduled to begin implementation in Spring 2007. The project is funded through ADA, and it does not provide for complete replacement of the sidewalks on entire streets. Individual property owners may be approached to voluntarily provide additional funding if this is a priority for them.

Francisco Ramirez of Public Works attended the meeting. He committed to clearly communicate the requirements for sidewalk and street repairs at the point of permit issuance. Mr. Ramirez will receive communications from Frank LaTorre when there are areas of particular concern.

The Block-By-Block Special Projects team is putting the finishing touches on the planters. Thirty-nine (39) have been re-built and re-stained and will be returned to the street in the near future. Thomas Brendler, Executive Director of GWP, has the master plan for returning planters to the street. On Thursday, May 11, a press conference will be held at Parcel 12, where the City will present the soil it is donating to the project. The hanging basket program will begin in June.

Doug Still, City Forester, is working to complete the survey of downtown trees as soon as possible. The city-wide survey is scheduled to be completed by fall 2006. This will allow the DID to coordinate its donated plantings during fiscal year 2007

A walk through downtown took place on April 26 at 7:30pm for the purpose of assessing the streetlight situation. The group included Joe and Laurie DiBattista, Frank LaTorre, Dan Baudouin, and Ed Shore. All present were struck by the vast improvement that is needed to make the area safer and more inviting at night. Joe spoke with the Mayor about his concerns, and the Mayor is aware of and sensitive to the fact there is inadequate street lighting. To that end, he is forming a committee to work toward improving the streetlight situation. The committee will be chaired by Garry Bliss and will include the DID. It was noted that some of the financial burden belongs to the City and some is the responsibility of property owners.

Smoking butlers will be purchased soon, and BBB staff will place them according to areas with the greatest need.

The DID performed a one-time graffiti removal project at Water Place Park because the problem was so severe and the Parks Department was not equipped to address it. The project took a week, and the results are noticed and appreciated by many. Frank LaTorre is working with the Mayor and the Parks Department to advocate for adequate police patrols/surveillance of the area, as well as the purchase of equipment and training of staff to handle this on-going issue. Inasmuch as Water Place Park is outside the district, the DID will not be purchasing equipment or supplying staff on an on-going

basis. It was suggested that we document the work completed by the DID and submit it to the Board of the Parks Department. Informing this group could be helpful in suggesting changes to graffiti ordinances.

According to the DID graffiti removal agreement, Block-By-Block staff are responsible only for graffiti removal that is on the ground level and/or able to be reached without the use of special equipment. A suggestion was made to research professional companies that provide graffiti-removal services, so that a referral can be made when the DID receives a work request that is outside of our scope of service. Frank LaTorre is working on this issue.

#### **5. Discussion of expanding survey to include residential and business lessees**

The DID survey distributed in March was sent to property owners and the list of first-floor retail merchants compiled for the downtown maps. This did not provide the opportunity for feedback to commercial, retail, and residential tenants who are leasing space. Because this is a significant portion of the population downtown, there is a need to survey these people as well. It was agreed that there is a dual intent to solicit feedback that can inform work plans, and also to build awareness of the DID's existence and performance in order to successfully re-authorize the District in 2 years. Mr. LaTorre noted that the results of the survey received so far have been useful in conveying public priorities with the City.



**A discussion followed which highlighted the belief that greater participation is preferable, and therefore, the need to solicit input of tenants is significant. The board would like the DID to continue to solicit input and feedback using multiple methods, including more personalized outreach to larger tenants like Verizon and Blue Cross, which have large workforces. The board suggested that Frank LaTorre schedule one-on-one meetings to solicit their feedback.**

**Joelle Crane has established many contacts for commercial buildings through her work for the Providence Foundation. These building contacts are willing to distribute information to tenants, and Ms. Crane is willing to help facilitate the distribution of the survey via these contacts.**

**Director Corso motioned to refer this issue to the DID Marketing Committee, which will make recommendations to the board regarding further distribution of the survey. Director Placco seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken as follows:**

**Director Corso   yes**

**Director Gagliardi           yes**

**Director Granoff   yes**

**Director Lappin   yes**

**Director Placco   yes**

**Director Ruggieri           yes**

**Therefore, the motion passed.**

## **6. Marketing Report**

**Joelle Crane reported that the Spring edition of the DID newsletters is complete and distributed copies. Twenty-nine aluminum signs bearing the DID logo have been installed in various locations throughout the district. The Downtown Marketing Advisory Committee has been meeting and its members have unanimously selected Advertising Adventures, located in the Jewelry District to provide branding, graphics development, and media buying services. Frank LaTorre and Maria Ruggieri participated in the process representing the DID.**

**7. Report from Urban Place Consulting and Director of Public Space**  
**Frank LaTorre reported that the Responsible Hospitality workshop facilitate by the RH Institute's Jim Peters is scheduled for next week, and the major stakeholders are committed including security/police, club-owners, city officials, including the Chair of the Licensing Board, the Jewelry District Association, and residents of the Downtown.**

**Mr. LaTorre attended a meeting convened by the City to inform dumpster-owners and companies what City Ordinances are on the books and that they will be enforced. Dumpster placement and emptying issues were addressed, as was the concept of a centralized trash compaction plan for the City, which is being piloted in one alley.**

**Those wanting to work toward revised ordinances were encouraged to work with officials to do so.**

#### **8. Report from Block-By-Block**

**Frank Zammarelli distributed a statistical report for the month of April 2006 with a comparison to April 2005. He reported that the Clean Team and Special Projects Team are 55-60% finished with re-mulching the tree wells and flower beds. Other significant areas of focus over the last month include graffiti-removal and painting of street fixtures. Two Clean Team members spent a week removing graffiti in Waterplace Park in a one-time effort.**

**Mr. Zammarelli has been receiving an increased number of complaints regarding panhandling. The majority of the incidents were happening in the morning as people were on their way to work. Therefore, he has created a Safety Team shift that starts at 7:00am to address this issue, which has been effective, as reflected in the monthly statistics. In order to minimize panhandling, Mr. Zammarelli also re-assigns Safety Team personnel to the pedestrian routes leading to Special Events. He clarified that passive panhandling is not illegal, and therefore, these folks cannot be arrested.**

#### **9. Other Business**

**Frank LaTorre announced that the DID has been awarded a Community Development Block Grant in the amount of \$40,000 to purchase additional trash receptacles to be placed within the District**

**Mr. LaTorre has sent thank you letters to the Mayor, Councilwoman Young, and Council President Lombardi for their support. Board Chair Evan Granoff will send thank you letters on behalf of the DPDMA Board.**

**Chris Placco of Johnson and Wales University has been approached by the police, who need a storefront location for a substation. They are considering using the abandoned comfort station owned by the City and located on Weybosset St. Johnson & Wales is willing to contribute funds and labor to make the space livable. Mr. Placco asked the board if they would be interested in contributing financially to this effort. The board determined that more information regarding the needs would be necessary before committing to the project. Mr. Placco is going to gather more information about the support that is needed, and he will keep the DID informed.**

## **10. Adjournment**

**The meeting was adjourned at 10:20am.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Leslie Huikko**